

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 186 845

CS 005 409

AUTHOR Klein, Marvin
 TITLE The Development and Use of Sentence Combining in the Reading Program.
 PUB DATE May 80
 NOTE 32p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association (25th, St. Louis, MO, May 5-9, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Instructional Materials; *Reading Comprehension; *Reading Instruction; *Sentence Combining; *Teaching Methods; *Writing Exercises; Writing Instruction; *Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

This paper shows how to integrate reading comprehension instruction and writing instruction through the use of sentence combining--the act of combining several short sentences that have been derived by transformational analysis from longer ones. Suggestions are offered to guide teachers through the necessary steps for designing appropriate sentence combining activities. The three sections of the paper present a definition and description of sentence combining; a procedure for production of sentence combining sets with examples that can serve as models, including closed and open varieties of exercises; and a number of suggestions for using the materials. (MKM)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO-
DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGIN-
ATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT
OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

THE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF SENTENCE COMBINING
IN THE READING PROGRAM

By

Marvin Klein
Department of Education
Western Washington University
Bellingham, WA 98225

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Marvin Klein

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

A paper presented at the annual
Convention of the International
Reading Association,
St. Louis, Missouri
May 5 - 9, 1980

Perhaps there is no more widely espoused idea in the reading/language arts areas than that which suggests in one fashion or another that the language producing and consuming skills are interrelated. Reading, writing, and speaking are all important in their own right, and further, they are important as contributing elements in the development of each other. This is a fundamental assumption of the language experience approach to reading instruction, for example. Literature based language and composition programs in the later grades are also attempts to translate these fundamental assumptions into practice.

This is not to suggest that critics have not raised questions about the notion of language skills interrelatedness. Note the recent research reviews by Patrick Groff, for instance. (Groff, 1977, 1978) However, most classroom teachers are probably likely to endorse the idea of language skills assisting each other in both development and skill maintenance.

Talking of the relatedness of the language skills, however, is one thing and developing successful teaching materials and practices is quite another. One of the more promising approaches which has surfaced recently is that which integrates reading comprehension and writing through transformationally based sentence-combining.

Sentence-combining is probably best known for the results it has generated in research in writing. Work by John Mellon in 1969 and

Frank O'hare in 1973 served as models for many later studies at both elementary and secondary grade levels which explored the efficacy of sentence-combining as a technique for improving sentence writing skills in learners. The results of this work are now widely publicized and cited in the literature

What is perhaps less well known is that significant work in sentence-combining as a technique for improving reading comprehension has also been done over the past few years with positive findings. Sandra Stotsky reviews much of that research in a comprehensive report on sentence-combining in Research in the Teaching of English (Spring, 1975). Additional work, such as that of Warren Combs, as reported in the Journal of Reading (Oct, 1977), adds substantially to the research record indicating that sentence-combining may well be one of the most promising single recent developments which can contribute directly to both written composition skills and reading comprehension improvement.

One of the difficulties most classroom teachers face, however, is the sparsity of suitable materials in sentence-combining on the commercial market. There are a few publications available (note bibliography). However, most of these stand as isolated examples, and since they are basically compendiums of sentence-combining materials, they are not designed to build on themes or narrative styles of a particular reading program in use in a given school. Thus, they often lack motivational power and are awkward to fit into the ongoing program of reading in a smooth fashion. There is thus little incentive for their use.

3

The most logical resource for designing sentence-combining materials is the teacher. The teacher knows best the themes and content most appropriate to her reading program and to her students' interests. Further, she is aware of particular needs and curriculum strengths and weaknesses. She has the necessary information needed for custom building activities such as these.

Unfortunately, most classroom teachers are also time bound with very little opportunity during the day to prepare instructional materials, especially when those materials are in an area which is new or different in significant ways. Thus it is critical that the teacher possess the knowledge necessary for developing sentence-combining activities efficiently.

It is with these factors in mind that the following suggestions are offered to guide the teacher through the necessary steps for designing appropriate sentence-combining activities.

These guidelines consist of three parts. First, a definition and description of sentence-combining is presented. Second, a procedure for production of sentence-combining sets is outlined with examples which can serve as models. Finally, a number of suggestions for use of the material are offered for consideration.

1) SENTENCE-COMBINING: IT'S BASIC FEATURES

Sentence-combining is the act of combining several short sentences which have been derived by transformational analysis from more elegant ones. Learners are to eliminate redundant words and phrases but retain all of the key ideas presented. In their most basic form, they appear as follows:

- 1) The turtle jumped into the pond.
- 2) The turtle was funny.
- 3) The turtle was little.
- 4) The pond was big.

A possible result sentence:

"The funny little turtle jumped into the big pond."

This type of sentence-combining activity is an OPEN variety. That is, the learner may be implicitly encouraged to combine the sentence set in a particular way, but there are usually a number of options yielding different results. For example, the student might produce a sentence such as this: "The funny little turtle jumped into the pond that was big." Although this result might not be as rhetorically pleasing, it is grammatical. In fact, herein is one of the attractions in sentence-combining. Students can come to see sentence structure and grammar as something not always in the "correct" or "incorrect" dichotomy they often face.

A second type of sentence-combining activity is the CLOSED variety. It usually appears in one of two forms. The first simply provides a mandatory cue word next to a sentence which is to be altered before combining with another. For example:

- 1) The batter swung at the ball.
- 2) The ball sped by her. (which)

Result: "The batter swung at the ball which sped by her."

The relative 'which' is used to replace the subject of the second sentence thus converting it to a relative clause.

A second form of the Closed variety is one with an indicated container slot in a consumer or matrix sentence in conjunction with a cue word.

- 1) The boy knew something.
- 2) The teacher was unhappy. (that)

Result: "The boy knew that the teacher was unhappy."

The cue word 'that' indicates the second sentence is to be altered by using 'that' in some capacity. The altered construction is then to be placed in the something slot of the first sentence. In this case, the result is an extended nominal clause functioning as grammatical object.

The most conspicuous difference between Open and Closed sentence-combining activities is that in the Closed variety the desired result is pretty

tightly-fixed. There is not the range of grammatical choices often associated with the Open variety. An additional assistance to the learner exists in the Closed variety. In addition to the cue word, which indicates that that particular sentence is to be converted into a dependent clause or phrase of some sort, this type of sentence-combining tells the student which sentence is the consumer (container or matrix) sentence by the something slot. Other sentences are obviously to be altered in such a way that they will be added to or embedded within the consumer sentence. They are insert sentences.

An additional technique which can be used with either of the two types of sentence-combining is that of indenting particular sentences in each set to indicate level of abstraction and to some extent, the direction of semantic movement within the sentences. For example, consider:

- 1) The couple walked slowly in the night.
- 2) The couple was arm in arm.
- 3) The couple was quiet.
- 4) The couple stared at the sea.
- 5) The sea was calm.
- 6) The sea was waveless.
- 7) The night was starry.

As one moves from left to right, the embedding pattern becomes clear. Sentences 2, 3, and 4 are to be embedded in sentence 1. Each of the three sentences is to play a grammatically and semantically parallel

7

role. Numbers 5 and 6 are to be embedded into the object of number 4. However, number 7, though last in the list of insert sentences, is at the same level of abstraction as numbers 2-3. It is to be embedded into the object position of number 1.

Possible result: "The quiet couple, staring at the calm, waveless sea, walked slowly arm-in-arm in the starry night."

Another technique is to use a combination of these various factors.

- 1) The detective suspects something.
- 2) The detective is smart.
- 3) The detective is wearing a rain coat.
- 4) The rain coat has a stain.
- 5) The robber is still in the building. (that)

Possible results include:

"The smart detective wearing a raincoat with a stain suspects that the robber is still in the building."

Or, "The smart detective who is wearing a stained raincoat suspects that the robber is still in the building."

And of course, there are other possibilities.

Given these factors, it is easy to see how complexity of any particular sentence-combining activity can be controlled in at least four ways.

- 1) One can increase or decrease the number of basic sentences to be

altered and combined. 2) The number of cue words and/or something slots in one or more basic sentences can be varied. 3) Indenting of basic sentences to indicate level of abstraction and semantic movement in the product sentence may be included or not. 4) And, finally, the order in which the basic sentences are presented in the set may be fixed so that the consumer sentence is not necessarily first or in any other predictable position. The same is true for all of the insert sentences in the activity.

Further examination of the nature of sentence-combining suggests that particular grammatical functions can be emphasized by careful choice of content and structure juxtapositioning of sentences which are to be combined in a given set. For example, consider this combination:

- 1) The baseball team lost the game.
- 2) Their pitcher was ill.

There are, of course, a few different possible resultant sentences: "The pitcher was ill and the team lost the game." is one. However, there is implicit pressure on the learner to use subordination as in, "The baseball team lost the game because their pitcher was ill."

Below are several examples or model sets with grammatical function form which is intended:

Grammatical
Function

Sentence-Combining Activity

- 1) Modification
(adjectival)

- 1) The girl drank the soda.
- 2) The girl was little.
- 3) The girl was in the booth.
- 4) The soda was sweet.

Possible result: "The little girl
in the booth drank a sweet soda."

- 2) Modification
(noun's nouns)

- 1) The book was old.
- 2) The book had a cover.
- 3) The cover was torn.

Possible result: "The old book's
cover was torn."

- 3) Object
Complement

- 1) They elected William.
- 2) William is captain.
- 3) The captain is new.

Possible result: "They elected William
the new captain."

- 4) Modification
(adverbial)

- 1) The turtle walked to the barn.
- 2) The turtle was slow.
- 3) The walk was casual.

Possible result: "The slow turtle walked
casually to the barn."

GrammaticalFunctionSentence-Combining Activity

- 5) Modification*
(clause length)

- 1) The motorcycle raced down the track.
- 2) The motorcycle belonged to Jenny. (that)

- 3) The track was dirt.

Possible result: "The motorcycle that belonged to Jenny raced down the dirt track."

- 6) Modification
(phrase length)

- 1) The players jogged toward the lockers.
- 2) The players panted heavily. (149)
- 3) The players jogged slowly.

Possible result: "The players, panting heavily, jogged slowly toward the lockers."

- 7) Modification
(appositives)

- 1) Mary Ann is nice.
- 2) Mary Ann is my cousin.

Possible result: "Mary Ann, my cousin, is nice."

*Simple sets can be designed using other relative pronouns--who and which--based upon this set as a model. For example: 1) The cook was proud of the dinner. 2) The cook prepared the food. (who) 3) the cook was young. 4) The dinner was roast duck.

Grammatical

Function

Sentence-Combining Activity

- 8) Subordination
(cause-effect)
and Modification
(adjectival)

- 1) The doctor couldn't get to the hospital.
- 2) He was in a traffic jam.
- 3) The traffic jam was bad.
- 4) The doctor was eager.

Possible result: "The eager doctor

couldn't get to the hospital because he was in a bad traffic jam."

- 9) Nominalization
(dependent clause,
object position)

- 1) He knows something.
- 2) The team was trying hard. (that)

Possible result: "He knows that the team was trying hard."

- 10) Nominalization
(infinitival,
subject position)
and adjectival
Modification

- 1) Something was a surprise.
- 2) Joe left the game. (for/to)
- 3) The surprise was big.

Possible result: "For Joe to leave the game was a big surprise."

- 11) Nominalization
(gerundive, sub-
ject position)

- 1) The kitten squealed. ('s/ing)
- 2) Something surprised the children.
- 3) The children were giggly.

| Grammatical Function | Sentence-Combining Activity |
|--------------------------------|---|
| and Adjectival Modification | Possible result: "The kitten's squealing surprised the giggly children." |

II) DESIGNING SENTENCE-COMBINING ACTIVITIES

The first inclination in designing sentence-combining materials is simply to write a series of short choppy sentences and group them into clusters. For the inexperienced writer of sentence-combining sets, however, this is not the most productive way to proceed. This approach often yields unimaginative sentences usually focusing on modification by adjectives only.

A far better technique is to make up a sensible sentence appropriate in grammatical and content complexity to the age and ability of the intended student and then break it into its various parts or basic insert sentences which were used in generating the original. Or, another alternative--and probably one best used in conjunction with production of original sentence combining sets--is to select sentences from passages in student texts and break them down into underlying insert sentences.

In understanding either of these approaches, the following steps will be helpful:

- 1) Locate the main verb of the sentence; the verb which enables you to identify the complete subject and complete predicate.
- 2) Look for single word adjectives and adverbs. For each of these there will be an underlying basic sentence. For example,
"The mean little boy quickly ate the green apple."

The main verb is ate; hence, the complete subject is, the mean little boy and the complete predicate is quickly ate the green apple. The mean little boy is derived from "the boy is little."

and "The boy is mean." The green apple is derived from "the apple is green." Quickly ate is derived from "Someone (thing) ate quickly."

Therefore, the array of sentences which were combined to produce the given example are the following:

Consumer Sentence (Main Sentence,

Container Sentence, Matrix Sentence):

Someone ate Something*

Insert Sentences (basic sentences which were altered by having words dropped and/or reordered):

1. The boy is little
2. The boy is mean.
3. The apple is green.

*This could be stated, "The boy ate the apple." if one wishes to avoid the slot positions.

- 4) The boy ate quickly. Or,
Someone ate quickly.

Try the following:

GROUP A

- 1) "A little chipmunk ate a big delicious nut."
- 2) "The young boy on the motorcycle clenched his gritty teeth."

(Note article end for breakdown, Group A).

- 3) Look for relative pronouns and subordinating conjunctions, e.g. relative pronouns--who, which, that; subordinating conjunctions--if, although, because, since, after, even though, in spite of the fact, etc." For each of these, there will be at least one underlying sentence.

In the case of relative pronouns, find the subject that the relative substitutes for, if necessary. That will be the subject of the basic sentence that was inserted in a consumer sentence.

For example,

"I know the boy who threw the rock."

This is generated from two sentences--"I know the boy." And "The boy threw the rock."

Subordinating conjunctions are easy, for they are simply added to the front of a basic sentence. "If you study, then you will pass." is built from "You study." and "You will pass."

Sentences become more interesting when they combine both modification, e.g., adjectives, and relativizations or subordination. Consider:

"She is the young girl that threw the heavy rock at the grumpy old dog on the corner."

- This is built from:
- 1) She is the girl.
 - 2) The girl is young.
 - 3) The girl threw the rock. (that)
 - 4) The rock was heavy.
 - 5) The rock was thrown at the dog.
 - 6) The dog was grumpy.
 - 7) The dog was old.
 - 8) The dog was on the corner.*

Try these:

GROUP B

- 1) "The little boy who is my cousin chased the scrawny cat."
- 2) "Since the old car wouldn't start, the exasperated man mumbled blasphemies." (Note Group B at article end.)
- 4) Look for extended nominalizations. Remember, they are most likely to be serving as main subject of the sentence or main object of the sentence. For example,

*You do not need to generate a basic sentence for prepositional phrases if you wish to keep the sentence-combining sets small.

"I know that he is captain of the team."

That he is captain of the team is an extended clause introduced by the relative pronoun that, and the entire clause serves as the object of the sentence.

Or,

"For the boy to leave the room without permission was wrong."

For the boy to leave the room without permission is the subject.

(Technically, it is an extended infinitival nominalization!

Notice to leave, the infinitive.)

"I know that the little man was crying," is from:

- 1) I know something.
- 2) The man was crying.
- 3) The man was little.

"For the young pitcher to throw a wicked curve ball to the tall batter was unexpected by the catcher." is from:

- 1) Something was unexpected by the catcher.
- 2) The pitcher threw a curve ball to the batter. (for/to)
- 3) The pitcher was young.
- 4) The batter was tall.

5. Look for extended modifiers, especially those with verb forms serving as modifiers and attend to those extended modifier constructs

which are set apart by commas. For example:

"The tiny bugs, gasping their last, buzzed the old dog."

Gasping their last is a participial phrase. The total sentence is generated from:

- 1) The bugs buzzed the dog.
- 2) The bugs were tiny.
- 3) The dog was old.
- 4) The bugs gasped their last. (ing)

Try this one:

GROUP G

"Flapping gently in the breeze, the sails grasped futilely for movement." (Note end of article)

Once sentence-combining sets have been developed in sufficient quantity by following these guidelines, it is easier to design them from scratch by assembling arrays of basic sentences. A sense of sentence cohesion develops which enables one to be efficient at the task.

III) SUGGESTIONS FOR USE OF SENTENCE-COMBINING IN THE READING PROGRAM

Perhaps the most significant way that sentence-combining contributes to improved reading comprehension has less to do with the context in which it is done than it has to do with the act itself. After doing a

sentence-combining activity and re-examining the mental energies devoted to the process, one can readily see how the activity is central to both language production and language analysis. Sentence structure and sentence content are both manipulated in such a fashion as to thoroughly immerse the participant in the intricacies of the sentence's internal workings, something that is fundamental to comprehension. In addition to general use, however, some specific suggestions are in order.

1) Select a passage from a story or narrative the students are to read.

Choose an opening sentence and break it into constituent basic sentences. Ask students to combine them. For example, consider these:

- 1) A man walked up and down.
- 2) The man was little.
- 3) The man was fat.
- 4) The man was old.
- 5) The man walked nervously.
- 6) The man was upon the veranda of a house.
- 7) The veranda was half decayed.
- 8) The house was small.
- 9) The house was frame.
- 10) The house stood near the edge of a ravine.
- 11) The ravine was near the town of Winesburg, Ohio.

This produces an exceptionally long sentence, but one, a well-known

author felt appropriate. Discuss various student versions. How are they alike? How are they different? Are some more pleasing than others?

Now, if one were writing a short story with a sad or tragic tone and the author wanted to establish such a mood for the story in this sentence, how would he write it? Which student's sentence sounds as if it would fit best in such a story?

Here is the original by Sherwood Anderson:

"Upon the half decayed veranda of a small frame house that

stood near the edge of a ravine near the town of Winesburg, Ohio, a fat little old man walked nervously up and down."

From "Hands" in Sherwood Anderson's
Winesburg, Ohio.

"Why does Anderson choose to construct the sentence this way? Why is his version effective?" are kinds of questions the teacher can use before pointing out that "Hands" is a tragic story about a pitiful man who has not coped well with self or others.

This particular activity is an excellent advance organizer for the reading of a story or assignment. Important characteristics of the author's thesis or main ideas can often be addressed with this sentence-combining technique.

Further, this particular activity is an effective way for students to learn important relationships which hold between sentence structure and meaning in the writing act.

- 2) Design sentence-combining sets in clusters such that the final product will be a paragraph which, when chained with others, will produce a story or if circumstances dictate, a nonfiction passage-- exposition or narration. For example, the following set was prepared by a junior high school home economics teacher:

Directions: Ask students to combine basic sentences adding and/or changing words and endings if necessary. The sentences should be combined to form a paragraph. Allow 15 minutes for this exercise.

After each student has completed the combining exercise, have them form groups of 3 or 4 to share their paragraphs and develop a group paragraph to be read to the rest of the class. Discuss the group paragraphs and the process used to arrive at them.

Basic Sentences:

Hank was hungry for a snack.

It was afternoon.

He looked in the cookie jar.

The cookie jar was empty.

He decided to make brownies.

He opened the cookbook.

The cookbook was his mother's.

It was a Betty Crocker cookbook.

The cookbook was well worn.

It had chocolate on the Brownie recipe.

He read the list of ingredients.

He needed flour.

He needed chocolate.

He needed eggs.

He needed shortening.

He needed sugar.

He needed baking powder

He needed salt.

Hank checked the cupboard for all the ingredients.

He found all of the ingredients.

He needed a mixing bowl.

He needed an 8" square pan.

He needed a large spoon.

He needed the spoon for mixing.

Hank mixed the ingredients.

He preheated the oven to 350.

He put the brownie mix in the pan.

He popped the pan into the oven.

The brownies baked for 25 minutes.

He could hardly wait to eat them.

He used a pot holder to take them out.

The brownies were crisp on top.

The inside was soft and chewy.

The color was rich chocolate.

They smelled scrumptious.

They satisfied his craving.

They spoiled his dinner.

Or, consider the following example by two middle school science teachers where they challenge students to apply sequencing skills and classification skills before actually doing the sentence-combining.

The Birth of Kittens

By Bonnie Brown, Dave Cornelius

Directions: First students will individually group the basic sentences below. Then in groups the students will compare their results. After they reach agreement on the groupings, the students will sequence the basic sentences within each group. Then they are to be combined into final sentences. (For younger

students the groupings could be provided for the students.) For follow-up activities the students individually order the sentences and write a composition.

- 1) The mother stimulates them.
- 2) The kittens cannot walk.
- 3) The mother cleans them.
- 4) The mother helps them start breathing.
- 5) Kittens are born blind.
- 6) Kitten size depends on the number in the litter.
- 7) The mother licks them all over.
- 8) The litter size depends on the type of cat.
- 9) The kittens are covered with fur.
- 10) The kittens are born without teeth.
- 11) Kittens are usually born at night.
- 12) Sometimes kittens are born dead.
- 13) The usual litter size for Persians is one or two.
- 14) Their teeth develop by the fourth week.
- 15) The mother eats one or two "after births."
- 16) First there is a watery discharge.
- 17) Kittens may be born head first.
- 18) "After births" nourish the mother cat during delivery.
- 19) Then the kitten is born.
- 20) The mother may try to use the closet.
- 21) Finally the afterbirth is expelled.

- 22) The kittens are usually born 20-45 minutes apart.
 - 23) Kittens may be born tail first.
 - 24) The kittens can wiggle around.
 - 25) The Kittens nurse after they are born.
 - 26) The kittens can be different colors.
 - 27) The kittens can mew.
 - 28) The kittens begin to nurse.
 - 29) The mother kitten can tell if a kitten is born dead.
 - 30) The color of a particular kitten can change.
 - 31) The kitten's eyes open in seven to ten days.
-
- 32) The color of a kitten changes as it grows up.

Notice that in both of these activities the teacher is to incorporate oral language activities as well as reading and writing.

Below is an excerpted passage from Louisa May Alcott's Little Women which was used effectively by a teacher.

- 1) Jo was 15.
- 2) She was tall.
- 3) She was thin.
- 4) She was tan.
- 5) She was like a colt.
- 6) She had long limbs.
- 7) Her limbs were always in her way.
- 8) She had a decided mouth.

- 9) She had a comical nose.
- 10) She had sharp gray eyes.
- 11) Her eyes appeared to see everything.
- 12) Her eyes were fierce, funny, or thoughtful.
- 13) Her hair was long.
- 14) Her hair was thick.
- 15) Her hair was her one beauty.
- 16) But her hair was usually bundled into a net.
- 17) The net kept it out of her way.
- 18) Jo had round shoulders.
- 19) Jo had big hands and feet.
- 20) Her clothes had a flyaway look.
- 21) She had an uncomfortable appearance.
- 22) She looked like a girl rapidly shooting up into a woman.
- 23) She didn't like this appearance.

Observe in these sentence clusters that some have already been combined. All adjectives are not broken out into insert sentences, for example. This is one way the designer of sentence-combining materials can control for complexity or length of the activity. It is also a means of focusing learner attention on particular grammatical or semantic functions where the student needs more work.

- 3) Building sentence-combining around various themes is also a useful technique to consider. Sentence-combining with focus on holidays or special times of the year is effective especially in the early grades. A second grade teacher, for example, developed clusters such as the following:

- 1) The night was dark.
- 2) The night was spooky.
- 3) The night was Halloween.

- 1) Somethings scare me.
- 2) Ghosts scare me.
- 3) Goblins scare me.
- 4) They scare me at night.

- 1) The witch jumped on her broom.
- 2) The broom was magic.
- 3) The witch was mean.

- 1) The witch is ugly.
- 2) The witch has a long pointed nose.
- 3) The witch is dressed in black.
- 4) The witch rides on a broomstick.

- 4) Sentence-combining overused can become tedious and drill-like in character. For this reason, most effective use is that which is periodic and relatively brief in nature. One strategy to consider

if an overhead projector is available in the room is to prepare a transparency roller in advance with various sentence-combining activities designed to meet different needs. At appropriate times the overhead can simply be wheeled out and used with the entire class.

- 5). Worksheets duplicated and grouped according to levels of complexity, grammatical functions, theme, etc. can be used in a variety of ways ranging from independent work to small group discussion and long range projects. Again, however, they should be used discretely so as not to overdo the activity.

* * * * *

Transformational sentence-combining is fun for learners, directly interrelates language producing and consuming skills, and possesses a classroom practicality potential seldom found in much of our research. It effectively expands the repertoire of instructional choices available to the reading teacher. The activities are relatively easy to design. Because of their nature it is a simple matter to focus on science, social studies, or even home economics content thus providing an excellent in for the reading coordinator wanting to stress reading in the content areas. Note the earlier examples in this article which were designed by subject matter teachers in a workshop setting and, more importantly, used in their classes with students.

Not a panacea, sentence-combining is instead one of a number of strategies

which can help us develop more literate students.

* * * * *

GROUP A BASIC SENTENCES

- 1) 1.1) A kitten ate a nut. (or, something ate something)
- 1.2) The kitten is little.
- 1.3) A nut is big.
- 1.4) A nut is delicious.
- 2) 2.1) The boy on the motorcycle clenched his teeth. (or, some-
one clenched something)
- 2.2) The boy was young.
- 2.3) His teeth were gritty.

GROUP B BASIC SENTENCES

- 1) 1.1) The boy chased the cat. (or someone chased something)
- 1.2) The boy is little.
- 1.3) The boy is my cousin. (who)
- 1.4) The cat is scrawny.
- 2) 2.1) The man mumbled blasphemies.
- 2.2) The man was exasperated.
- 2.3) The car wouldn't start. (since).
- 2.4) The car was old.

GROUP C BASIC SENTENCES

- 1) 1.1) The sails grasped for movement.
- 1.2) They grasped futilely.
- 1.3) The sails flopped in the breeze. (ing)
- 1.4) They flopped gently.

(A number of variations of any of these are acceptable.)

REFERENCES

- Combs, W. "Sentence-Combining Practice Aids Reading Comprehension."
Journal of Reading (October, 1977):18-24.
- Groff, P. "Children's Oral Language and Their Written Composition."
The Elementary School Journal 78(January 1978):181-191.
- Groff, P. "Oral Language and Reading." Reading World (October 1977):
 71-78.
- Stotsky, S. "Sentence-Combining as a Curricular Activity: Its
 Effect on Written Language Development and Reading Comprehension."
Research in the Teaching of English 9(Spring, 1975):30-71.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Klein, M. Teaching Sentence Structure and Sentence-Combining in the Middle Grades. Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1976.
- O'Hare, F. Sentencecraft: An Elective Course in Writing. Lexington, KY: Ginn and Company, 1975.
- Strong, W. Sentence-Combining: A Composing Book. New York: Random House, 1973.